

CHIP CARD CONNECTOR WITH A LOCKING MECHANISM

5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

10 The present invention relates to a chip card connector comprising a base frame with integrated contact springs and a closing cover, the cover being hinged on the base frame.

2. Description of Prior Developments

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A type of chip card connector as defined above is described in US Patent No. 5,603,629. The chip card connector as described has in its closing cover a support for the chip card by which the latter is
20 positioned in a precise manner. The base frame with integrated contact springs has a grid for fixing the contact spring precisely, in such way that the chip card connector as a whole, with its minimum of four surface layers, occupies a relatively large amount of space
25 which is a major disadvantage when operating under very tight space conditions.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

30 The present invention has as a primary objective that of improving a chip card connector in such a way that with minimum dimensions and a minimum construction height, the opening and closing of the chip card connector cover is possible even under extremely tight space conditions.

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The above described objective is achieved according to the features of the present invention, by a chip card

connector comprising a base frame with integrated contact springs and a closing cover hinged from above the base frame in such a way that in a closed position, the chip card introduced into the base frame leans
 5 against the contact springs, projecting into the interior of the base frame in which the closing cover has on the side opposite its rotation axis, two stop arms with their indexing tip members engaged in the closed position under the shoulders provided on the edge
 10 of the base frame located opposite one another, and which can rapidly be folded against one another at the cover, in order to cause it to open.

According to a preferred embodiment of the present
 15 invention, the stop arms are essentially made from two small bars coming from three open recesses, arranged next to one another, which extend as far as a front zone in which they are widened and the indexing tip members being located on the front edge bent at 90° angle.

20 According to a further embodiment of the present invention, projections are provided in the widened front zone of the stop arms in order to catch the arms.

25 The chip card connector according to the invention has an extremely reduced construction volume, given that essentially, it consists of two parts, each of which performs all the functions which in the hitherto state of the art, were divided over different individual
 30 components. In this way, the chip card is guided at the same time as it is being placed into the base frame, in such a way that it reaches its final position. The contact springs are integrated directly into the base and project through the openings, which are provided
 35 there, into the interior of the chip card connector where they meet the corresponding contacts on the chip card. The closing cover develops the necessary pressure,

whereby the chip card is pressed against the contact springs and forms a closing mechanism, which is very easy to use by the top, such that it is possible to dispense with a side access of the chip card connector when it is being fitted under restricted conditions of space. This is particularly interesting for the fitting of chip card connectors for SIM cards in mobile telephones, which, due to their compact constructions, leave only an extremely small space for the fitting of a chip card connector.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing aspects and other features of the present invention are explained in the hereinafter description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1 is a chip card connector empty and in closed position according to the invention;

Fig. 2 is the chip card connector from Fig. 1 in open position ;

Fig. 3 is the chip card connector from Fig. 2 with the SIM card inserted ; and

Fig. 4 is the chip card connector from Fig. 3 in closed position.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Fig. 1 shows the chip card connector 1 according to the invention, empty and in a closed position. The closing cover 4 has three large recesses 13, 14, 15 open on one side of the cover, such that small bars are formed which serve as stop arms 7, 8. These stop arms 7, 8 become

thinner at their free end in order to make them flexible in the direction of the cover. The front zones 7a, 8a of the stop arms are widened and extend above the front edge of the chip card connector downwards into the right hand corner with respect to the surface of the closing cover. On the front edges there are arranged indexing tip members 9, 10, which, as shown in Fig. 2, engage the under the shoulders 11, 12 which are formed in the front edge of the base frame 2.

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Fig. 2 illustrates the chip card connector 1 in an open position showing contact springs 3 that are fixed within the base, the free ends 3A of which project through recesses 30 in the interior portion of the card connector 1. The interior portion of the base frame 2 has a contour, which corresponds to the SIM chip card to be inserted within the connector, such that the card lies precisely opposite to the corresponding contact springs 3.

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As shown in Fig. 3 the correct positioning of the chip card 5 is moreover ensured by a retaining member 18, which is arranged in the zone of the axis of rotation 6 of cover 4 in the center of the edge of the base frame under which the chip card 5 is pushed when it is introduced (see arrow 21 in Fig. 3) The closing cover 4 is hinged to the base frame 2 by hinge pins 19; the said hinge pins being arranged on extensions of the lateral edges of the closing cover 2 which are of such dimensions that the closing cover 4 does not cover the retaining member 18, but can be lowered in front of its front longitudinal edge, until the surface of the retaining member 18 and the surface of the closing cover 4 are on the same level. In this way, by closing the closing cover 4, the chip card 5 leans evenly against the elastic force of the contact springs 3 until the level of the lower edge of the small bar 18, which

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causes the closing cover 4 to be indexed in that position under the shoulders 11,12 which receive the indexing tip members 9,10.

5 As further shown in Fig. 3, the unlocking of the indexing takes place by a movement of superposition of the stop arms 7, 8. For this purpose, they are caught by the claws of the chip and of the index at the shoulders 16, 17 (see Fig. 1) which releases the indexing tip
10 members 9, 10 from the shoulders 11, 12. A spring 20 shown in Fig. 3, which is fitted between the base frame 2 and the closing cover 4 in the usual way, automatically causes the closing cover 4 to spring open so that a SIM card can be inserted or extracted.

15 The chip card connector 1 according to the features of the present invention, is formed of an extremely flat construction (see Fig. 4), given that its construction height is only finally determined by the thickness of
20 the materials of the base and of the closing cover 4, such that the final arrangement corresponds to the construction height of its parts plus the thickness of the SIM card. Due to the fact that the mechanism of opening of the stop arms 7, 8 is accessible from above,
25 it is possible to dispense with the side access of the chip card connector which favours its fitting in a restricted space, especially in mobile telephones.

It should be understood that the above description is
30 only illustrative of the invention. Various alternatives and modifications can be devised by those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the present invention is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications and variances which fall
35 within the scope of the appended claims.